

PLAIN TALKS

GULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANY

MAY, 1940

GREAT LONE STAR STATE BORN IN FEW MILES OF NAVASOTA

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE SAW FIRST LIGHT IN NAVASOTA DIVISION



Navasota division is rich in historic lore. We visited many historic spots on a recent tour of the Division. A perfect choice of names was made when the Indian name Tejas, which means "friends", was bestowed on this great state. You'll find a friendly spirit prevails throughout this geographically large division.

Here in Navasota division you can experience the thrill of standing before the monument erected in honor of the great French explorer, LaSalle; visiting the old town of Washington-On-The-Brazos where you will see a replica of the first capitol of Texas, a facsimile of the Texas declaration of independence which laid the foundation for our heritage of freedom. There also you can visit the well preserved home of the last president of the Texas republic and you'll wonder at the durability of the immense, painstakingly hand-hewn timbers with which folks built homes in those days.

At Anderson one of the most famous inns of the stage-coach era still stands.

Near Hempstead is an old plantation from where General Sam Houston launched an attack to win the battle of San Jacinto.

At Huntsville you can see, as we did, the state park in which Sam Houston's old home still stands, his log cabin law office, the house in which he died, a beautiful lake made in the shape of the State of Texas, and you can feel insignificant as we did when standing before a giant, aged pecan tree that was a seedling when Houston lived.

There is a memorial museum on the grounds which is filled with relics and mementos of General Houston and his day and just across the street is the first teacher-training school in the southwest, Sam Houston State Teachers College.

A trip up the shortest official U. S. Highway in the country leads to the grave of Houston. It's just two blocks long.

You will, no doubt, be able to turn back the pages of your memory to recall that

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NEW METHODS BRING BETTER SERVICE



Folks in the show business believe that, regardless, "the show must go on" and our engineers and distribution men feel the same way about electric service.

So they devised this "trailer-mounted" substation (top) to handle service uninterruptedly during changeovers from 2.3 to 4.0 KV in Beaumont.

It's working like a charm for the change-over crew shown at bottom. Left to right, Floyd Smith, Forrest Hall, Harry Leicht, Jr., Walter Kimble and Earl Fillingame. Homer Vaughn, Ernest McDonald and Otis McClendon were working on the pole and couldn't be coaxed down for the picture.

LOUIS SWANN OF LAKE CHARLES WITH US 39 YEARS LAST MAY 15



L. A. SWANN

ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT

Louis A. Swann was born in Rapides Parish, came to Lake Charles in March 1901 for a visit, and remained. Married on October 4, 1917 and has two children, a daughter and a son.

He commenced work with the Electric Company on May 15, 1901, as shipping clerk in the Ice Department during the summer of 1901 and was transferred to the office for the winter months and remained there.

According to Mr. Swann, he was at the end of first year customer's ledger book-keeper and continued those duties until the end of the third year. Then on general books until about 1910.

About this time he had a multitude of duties to perform, looked after the purchasing, banking, collections, taxes and insurance as an office supervisor. As some of the other men under him developed they took over some of his duties and during the World War work was very heavy. He was assistant to the president.

Upon the death of Mr. Fred Landry these duties were increased. Mr. Swann was doing the above work when the company was sold to the Lake Charles Electric Company. He was then Chief Clerk for the new company and when the Louisiana Electric Company took over the old company, was made purchasing agent, in charge of taxes and insurance.

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NAVASOTA (continued from page 1)

Rene LaSalle was one of the most noted of the French explorers. He brought the second of the six flags to fly over Texas, that of France. And it was with the discovery of the great Mississippi River that he carved himself a niche in the world's hall of fame.

LaSalle was killed by one of his own men during an expedition in 1687. The explorer's death occurred on the Navasota River near the present site of the town of Navasota.

Texas Declared Free

It was at the old town of Washington, a few miles southwest of Navasota on the west bank of the Brazos River, that 41 delegates met March 2, 1836 in freezing cold in an unheated house with no windows or doors, to sign a declaration that Texas was an independent republic and free of Mexican rule.

For cases of waning allegiance we recommend standing, as we did, before the framed facsimile of the declaration of Texas independence and reading the inscription. You might wonder what hardships the pioneers suffered that they should so earnestly desire freedom for themselves and descendants.

The birthplace of the Lone Star state is now a well-kept state park visited by thousands of tourists yearly and the site of outings and barbecues by citizens from nearby communities.

Romantic Old Sites

In Anderson you'll experience the romance and adventure which surrounds the old Fanthorp Hotel. This famous hostelry drew the great and near-great during the early days of Texas and was the hub of two major transportation lines in the stage coach era.

At Groce's Plantation near Hempstead you'll hear fascinating stories of General Sam Houston and the Battle of San Jacinto. It was here that Houston stopped in his retreat before Santa Anna, the Mexican leader, reorganized his demoralized troops and launched a fierce counter-attack which was the turning point in the war. Houston's victory at the Battle of San Jacinto resulted in the surrender of Santa Anna.

College Shows Past and Present

On the grounds of Sam Houston State Teachers College at Huntsville the ivy-covered walls of the many-gabled main building bring the past sharply in contrast with the modern, streamlined dormitories. Not unpleasantly, but to remind you that here also is a historic spot.

State owned, the College was founded in 1879 and is the second oldest state-supported educational institution in Texas. It is a five-year college, grants the master's degree.

The Huntsville unit of the Texas Prison System is the main prison and receiving

center for ten state-operated prison farms. In 1849 the first permanent Texas penitentiary, a log construction, was built on the site of the present prison.

Our visit to "The Walls" was short and to the point. We didn't like the air of finality with which those steel doors clanged shut behind us. During a short interview with the Warden, we were silently thankful that our transgressions had been confined to boyhood apple-swiping and mischief making.

16 Counties — 10,000 Square Miles

Historic lore and spots of interest are by no means all there is to be seen in the Navasota Division.

This division serves 59 communities in 16 counties and if that doesn't sound impressive to you then take a peek at the map of Texas. You'll find that most Texas counties are man-sized affairs and you won't be surprised when we say that in area the 16 counties served by Navasota Division cover about 10,000 square miles.

66 and 33 KV transmission lines "box the compass" over this vast territory carrying service through 55 substations to nearly 8,000 residential customers, not to speak of power and commercial service to cotton gins, cotton seed oil mills, cotton compresses, oil pipe line pumping stations, oil fields, lumber mills, schools, various businesses and small industries and electric service to better display the spots of interest which annually attract thousands of tourists.

Bedecked by Beautiful Bluebonnets

One of the recent attractions in Navasota was the second annual Bluebonnet Festival. Each year four trails leading to fields abounding in the state flower are marked for tourists who travel many miles to see the bluebonnets in bloom.

Parade Float in 1940 Bluebonnet Festivities



Cotton is King in the Navasota Division and throughout the territory you will notice cotton compresses where they have machines which put a heck of a lot of cotton in a heck of a small space, cotton gins where the fibers are separated from the seeds, cotton seed oil mills where the base oil for many of the more popular brands of shortenings and cooking oils comes from and the left-over seed pulp is made into plant food for flower gardens.

Unique Stadium

In Navasota we visited an "underground" football stadium. No fooling, the up-to-date, finely lighted high school stadium there is below ground level and built in a huge oval excavation. You can step right from your car into the uppermost rows of the grandstand. (We made a note to have a good excuse ready for another trip to Navasota after football season opens).

As you travel around the division you will probably pass near A & M College at College Station. We don't serve this institution but many of the Gulf States engineers got their degrees there.

Communities Thrive, Industries are Unusual

In Madisonville you'll see an electric cotton gin of the latest type which adds to our load in this section. Madisonville attests to the fact that this area is progressing as there has been an 81% population increase during the last ten years. Madisonville is no boom town so this growth is the steady progress of a healthy community.

You'd be interested in visiting Calvert and Cleveland for here you can see immense electric draglines biting huge hunks out of gravel pits. Maybe you've wondered, as we had, where the gravel comes from that we cover roads with and use for building purposes. Well, as you see it on the roads is just how it comes out in its natural state.

In Somerville electricity plays a part in treating timbers with creosote as it is done at the Gulf Coast & Santa Fe Railroad Treating Plant.

Lumber, Oil and Farming Outstanding

The greater part of three counties separates the Navasota Division proper from Alvin which is the most southerly point in the division. Near Alvin is the deepest producing oilwell in Texas, 11,423 feet. We purchase power for redistribution in Alvin, to oil fields and a thriving dairy industry.

Near Huntsville you will pass fine herds of cattle, crops of sorghum, hay, peanuts, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peaches, pears, plums and other abundant truck farming crops all of which are to be found generally throughout the entire division.

In Trinity the lumber industry is foremost, the Texas Long Leaf Lumber Company being one of the largest there. Fuller's Earth deposits are generally distributed throughout the section but the principal production comes from Riverside. Two large plants are located there for the purpose of producing the clay-like substance which is used in refining cottonseed oil and in some petroleum lubricating oil processes.

Franklin claims the highest saturation percentage on electric ranges in the entire Navasota Division. Of the 196 residential customers there, 81 are using electric ranges.

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1. C. V. Merriam, Division Superintendent.
2. Newly remodelled division office at Navasota.
3. LaSalle monument in Navasota.
4. Replica of house where Texas declaration of independence was signed. Old Washington.
5. Monument over Sam Houston's grave in Huntsville.
6. Houston's old home in Huntsville.
7. Law office of Sam Houston in yard near his home.

8. "Steamboat" house where Houston died. Huntsville.
9. Ivy-covered main building of Sam Houston State Teachers College at Huntsville.
10. Main building of State Prison at Huntsville.
11. Oil pipe line pumping station at Cleveland. Typical of many throughout Navasota Division.
12. Montgomery County Courthouse at Conroe.
13. Texas Company Fuller's Earth plant at Waco.

14. The highly odorous business of making veneer panels at Cleveland.
15. New County Hospital at Conroe.
16. Modern, electrically operated cotton gin at Madisonville.
17. One of the division's many cottonseed oil mills. Navasota.

PLAIN TALKS GOES TO A PARTY



The Beaumont bowling team has scored two very convincing victories over the Port Arthur squad since our report of the first match in which Beaumont took a beating.

Clamorous protests of "Class A bowlers" and "ringers" on the Beaumont team have been heard emitting from the bailiwick of L. L. Hirsch, Port Arthur team coach.

Both teams and the rooting section had a swell time at the Neches assembly hall get-together after the final match, April 26.

FLASH—Port Arthur calls to tell us that their team has just finished the City League season there by winning the local Class "D" championship.

BATON ROUGE CELEBRATES



Shots of the stag fishfry thrown by Baton Rouge sales organization April 27.

Top, a determined assault on boiled crabs brought in by Morris Cunningham.

Bottom; left, Bill Efferson preparing catfish for the skillet; right, Frank Smith and Eldon Werner doing the conventional thing with provender.

Badminton matches, volley ball, a horse-shoe pitching demonstration by Bill Goff and a pole climbing exhibition at the expense of nearby trees filled out the sports program.

The pole climbing was strictly amateur stuff. A. H. Casanova, Bully Redfield and Jim Hodge did lots of pole hugging and not much pole climbing.

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Published monthly by and for employees of Gulf States Utilities Company as a medium for a better appreciation of our responsibilities to each other and the public.

NEWS EDITORS: Don Brown, Louisiana Division, Baton Rouge; Bill Hammond, Texas Division, Beaumont.

ART EDITOR: Jack Gammage, Beaumont.
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Kenneth Sutton, Beaumont.

S T A T I C

The Lake Charles division office is getting all dressed up. Work was started May 13 on the complete remodelling of interior and exterior of our Broad Street building in Lake Charles. . . . Mr. True and his gang will be mighty proud of the place when it gets all dolled up. . . . Who wouldn't be! .

* * * *

Average Kwh per home customer for March . . . 1,018. . . .

* * * *

A fat man bumped into a lean one going up the post office steps.

"From the looks of you," said the fat one, belligerently, "there must have been a famine."

"And from the looks of you," retorted the lean one, "you're the guy who caused it."

* * * *

NEW EMPLOYEES . . . Howdy. . . . And welcome! . . . G. P. Fillingame, F. W. Hall and H. Garrett in Beaumont Line . . . John Graves, Louisiana Station . . . Herman Myers, Beaumont Storeroom . . . L. R. Bird, Liberty Line . . . Lyda Drouet, Beaumont Cashier . . . Joe Suttles, Huntsville Line . . . Betty Joyce Mabry, Beaumont Stores Accounts . . . Mildred Gideon, Baton Rouge Accounting. . . .

* * * *

RESIGNED . . . Francis Gilbert, Baton Rouge Accounting . . . Emily Woodson, Beaumont Cashier. . . .

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BEAUMONT SOFTBALLERS ARE TOPS



As we go to press, the Beaumont softball team is in first place in the first half of the City League season.

After getting off to a slow start the fellows are making quick work of the fast Class "B" league.

Standing: Lester Henderson, Cooper Fitch, Paul Wofford, Durwood Steele, Amos Schiller, Andy Poulson, Jim Atkins.

Kneeling: "Bubba" Stahl, Harry Rafferty, Manager Tony Fontana, Jim Baird, B. E. Cruthirds, Jack Bissell, Louis Romano. "Slim" Larkin was absent when this picture was taken.

STATIC (continued from page 4)

POLITICAL 'ISMS' AS DEFINED BY THE LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH:—

Socialism—You have two cows. You give one to your neighbor.

Fascism—You have two cows. You give both to the government. The government gives you part of the milk.

Nazism—You keep the cows and give the milk to the government. The government sells part of it to you.

Communism—The government shoots you and keeps both the cows.

New Dealism—The government shoots one cow, it milks the other, and pours the milk down the drain.

* * *

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Vic Beagle and Floyd Aubin have been seen buzzing around the Beaumont office getting ready to start their annual pilgrimage around the Texas division . . . Cashiers must have vacations too, so Vic and Floyd are the pinch-hitters . . .

Pearl Tabor is back from a leave of absence and hitting the ball in Beaumont Customer Accounts. . . .

V. B. Hereford, Superintendent at Madisonville, will soon be moving back into his newly remodelled office. . . . Superintendent Floyd Sharp getting his quarters at Somerville polished up. . . .

E. W. Ward, Navasota Line, recently won a spankin' new wrist watch in the Madisonville Golf Tournament. . . . We were in Madisonville a few days ago but didn't see the new ticker. . . . It seems Ward's Missus took over. . . .

* * *

On the occasion of his 73rd birthday, Thomas Alva Edison said: "I am glad that the eight hour day had not been invented when I was a young man. I am wondering what would have happened to me by now if fifty years ago some fluent talker had converted me to the theory of the eight hour day and convinced me that it was not fair to my fellow workers to put forth my best efforts in my work. This country would not amount to as much as it does if the young men of fifty years ago had been afraid that they might earn more than they were paid."

* * *

Ruth Landry, Lake Charles Home Ec; Ruby Nelson and Jackie Stockard, Navasota Home Ecs, report that they had an attendance of approximately 2,000 persons at the Eighth Annual Cooking School in Huntsville, May 7, 8, and 9. . . . Mrs. Ross Woodall, business manager of the Huntsville Item, deserves a lion's share of credit for the success of the 1940 Health Kitchen Institute.

The local newspaper and Gulf States are co-sponsors of this kitchen-craft school.

* * *

Several farmers at a country store were talking about potato bug losses.

First Farmer: "Them bugs ate my whole crop in two weeks."

Second Farmer: "They ate my crop in two days, and then sat around on the trees and waited for me to plant more."

"Well, boys," the owner of the store broke in: "That may be so, but I'll tell you what I saw right here in my store. I saw four or five potato bugs examining my books just before planting time to see who had bought seed potatoes."

* * *

DUBS, DIVOTS, AND DURN-ITS!



Left side: top, Day Seastrunk thought it was funny; bottom, Brice Pettie powerhouses the pill.

Center: top, (left to right) Johnny Knapp, Dave Dawson, Pat Bishop and Maurice Anawaty ready for action; center, Jack Connaughton (left) looks over a map of the course with Bill Hilsman (right) and plans a "blitzkreig" on the opponents; bottom, Slim Larkin seconds a preliminary duel between Ralph Spafford (left) and "Preacher" Routt (right) with golf clubs at ten paces.

Right side: top, Jimmy Crabbe (left), F. R. Weller (center) and "Pappy" Sandefer (right); bottom, Randy McAlpine takes a cut at one.

There is a little argument as to who was really the winner of the May 11 golf tournament between the two Beaumont refrigerator campaign teams.

It seems that they forgot to decide beforehand whether scoring should be done by matchplay or medalplay rulings.

Sales Supervisor Johnny Knapp claims victory by medalplay and DR Supervisor Pat Bishop argues that matchplay scoring made his team the winner.

We'll bet they would never have been allowed to play if the greens-keeper could have known the shape the course would be left in.

Last report is that another match is in the offing with the laurels for the first match as a prize.

RE-NAMING SOCIAL CLUB PAYS OFF!

From now on the Brelasco Club will have a new name, "The Short Circuit Club", and Sam Fitzgerald, Baton Rouge Gas, is five bucks richer as author of the new club monicker.

The new name for the Baton Rouge employees' social club was announced at an outing April 20 and club president Jimmy Barrick, Baton Rouge Gas, told of plans to construct badminton courts near the bus garage and the organization of a tournament.

The Board of Directors has framed a new set of by-laws and will submit them for the Club's approval sometime soon.

Bowling in Baton Rouge . . . Two teams in the Gulf States Bowling League are tied for first place . . . The "Generators"; Bill Gurney and Tommy Crossan of Louisiana Station, Nap Watson, Joe Austin and Howard Charlton of Accounting were out in front until three straight games were won by the "Amps"; Bill Parker of Sales and Neel Buel, Johnny Harrop, Jack Chatelain, Emile Ackoury all in Accounting. . . .

(Continued on page 6)

LOUISIANA GETS NEW GOVERNOR



Nope, this isn't a shot of a caviar sandwich. It's part of the crowd that jammed Baton Rouge and its environs to celebrate the May 14 inauguration of Sam H. Jones, new governor of Louisiana.

A mammoth parade from the state capitol to L. S. U. stadium was made up of more than 100 units including, L. S. U. Cadets, National Guard detachments, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and nearly 50 bands including college and industrial bands and nearly all the high school bands in the state.

A majority of the business houses closed their doors part of the day so employees could attend the celebration.

NAVASOTA (continued from page 2)

You will really enjoy a trip to the State Park about six miles from Huntsville. Here is a vacationers' paradise. This park, the newest in the entire state system, covers 2,044 acres of woodland on which is located a 250 acre artificial lake. Every facility is provided for enjoyable outings.

As in the rest of the division, the territory around Conroe is highly productive agriculturally and abundant in natural resources but much of Conroe's progress is due to the acres and acres of the finest timber land in the southern belt which is to be found here. Much of Conroe's prosperity is due to the huge Conroe oil field. This area is covered with pipe lines, gasoline stations, pump stations and oil company camps.

Pump Stations Add Big Loads

In Cleveland you will see more evidence of the lumber industry but the oil industry is also well represented. In the space of a few miles we saw pipe line stations of four of the country's major oil companies; Magnolia, Texas Company, Atlantic Refining and Shell Petroleum, and as the fellow put it, "these loads are no small potatoes".

Take our word for it! You'll enjoy a trip through the Navasota Division. You'll enjoy seeing modern modes of living and industry set against a rich background steeped in Texas history. You'll enjoy the warm welcome of those friendly Texans. And, on leaving, you'll be glad, as we are, to thank Division Superintendent "Mike" Merriam and his gang for making our stay both pleasant and interesting.

SWANN (continued from page 1)

About 1930 when the company was building all of the new lines he was relieved of the taxes and insurance and devoted all of his time to the purchasing. This was continued until the purchasing department was consolidated with the Texas Division in 1936.

After the storm of August 6, 1918 when all communications were cut off Mr. Swann went to New Orleans and got together all of the line material and other necessary material for rebuilding the street car and power lines. This had to be done without communicating with the Lake Charles office as all telephone and telegraph wires were down. He borrowed and bought material from companies in New Orleans.

The first 50 HP motor that was sold in Lake Charles, was sold to Lake Charles Planing Mills Company by Mr. Swann.

He assisted in selling the first electric sign sold in Lake Charles.

He helped install the first consumers electric meter in Lake Charles.

At the time the company took over the street car lines he witnessed the change from mule cars to electric cars.

The Hall Hotel located where the City Jail is now standing was connected with

stop base lamps in series. At that time all other installations in Lake Charles were being operated on the frequency of 133 cycles and 52 volts.

He was also here when the change from absorption to compression ice machines took place.

When Louis Swann came to work for the company the present office of A. E. Beattie housed the compound Corless engine which was used to operate the generators producing the current for Lake Charles. That was the only brick building on the property.

This May 15, Louis A. Swann celebrated his 39th year of helping render dependable public service.

STATIC (continued from page 5)

The most precious thing anyone—man or store, anybody or anything—can have is the good will of others. It is something as fragile as an orchid and as beautiful; as precious as a gold nugget and as hard to find; as powerful as a great turbine and as hard to build; as wonderful as youth and as hard to keep.—Amos Parrish.

* * * *

Only one marriage has been reported since last issue. . . . C. S. Griffin of Neches Station went down the "middle-aisle" May 4. . .

* * * *

Maybe the preachers haven't been so busy but Old man Stork has . . . In chronological order here are the important events . . . April 12, a fifth boy to Jack Donaldson of Baton Rouge Electric Distribution. Boy! Wouldn't Eddie Cantor like to talk to Jack. . . April 17, Joe Bailey, Jr. to Joe Craddock, Navasota Serviceman. . . April 25, daughter Dorothy Allison to Fred Walters of Port Arthur Lakeside Station. . . April 27, daughter Connie Elaine to Conrad Weisgerber, Baton Rouge Lineman. . . May 5, son James Milton to Jimmy Crabbe, Beaumont DR. . . May 7, daughter Lynda Elizabeth to A. F. Gager, Beaumont Meter. . . May 20, son David, Jr. to Dave Dawson, Beaumont Repair. . . May 23, son John Gilbert to J. P. Peveto, Port Arthur Accounting. . .



From the Hansens in Baton Rouge comes this shot of themselves and the new Boss in the family . . . Humps is in Baton Rouge Accounting and Gwen was formerly Home Economist in Central Division. . .

* * * *

TRANSFERS . . . Ada Shaddock from Beaumont Stores Accounts to Voucher Clerk. . . Amos Schiller from Beaumont Storeroom to Customer Accounts. . . Ray Pace from Beaumont Accounting to Purchasing department. . .

* * * *

Does What He Wants . . .
He Is An American

HE IS an American.

He hears an airplane overhead and if he looks up at all does so in curiosity, neither in fear nor in the hope of seeing a protector.

His wife goes marketing, and her purchases are limited by her needs, her taste, her budget, but not by decree.

He comes home of an evening thru streets which are well lighted, not dimly in blue.

He reads his newspaper and knows that what it says is not concocted by a bureau, but an honest, untrammelled effort to present the truth.

He has never had a gas mask on.

He has never been in a bomb-proof cellar.

His military training, an R. O. T. C. course in college, he took because it excused him from the gym course, and it was compulsory.

He belongs to such fraternal organizations and clubs as he wishes.

He adheres to a political party to the extent that he desires—the dominant one, if that be his choice, but with the distinct reservation that he may criticize any of its policies with all the vigor which to him seems proper—any other as his convictions dictate, even if it be his decision, one which holds that the theory of government is wrong and should be scrapped.

He does not believe, if his party is out of power, that the only way in which it can come into power is through a bloody revolution.

He converses with friends, even with chance acquaintances, expressing freely his opinion on any subject without fear.

He does not expect his mail to be opened between posting and receipt, nor his telephone to be tapped.

He has not registered with the police.

He carries an identification card only in case he should be the victim of a traffic accident.

He thinks of his neighbor across international borders—of those to the north as though they were across a state line, rather than as foreigners—of those to the south more as strangers since they speak a language different from his own, and with the knowledge that there are now matters of difference between his government and theirs, but of neither with an expectancy of war.

He worships GOD in the fashion of his choice.

His children are with him in his home, neither removed to a place of greater safety, if young, nor if older, ordered ready to serve the State with sacrifice of limb or life.

He has his problems, his troubles, his uncertainties, but all others are not overshadowed by the imminence of battle and sudden death.

He should struggle to preserve his Americanism with its priceless privileges.

He is a fortunate man.

He is an American.

—New York Sun.